

# Prevention against drowning

## Fact Sheet

Whether or not you've taken your little one swimming, never assume that you can take your eye off them - or be out of arms reach when they're swimming. In some instances, our children are so supremely confident that you'll need to be particularly on your guard against them happily diving in!

## Be-water-smart

To help prevent any accidents, we have compiled these simple guidelines for you to follow

**Check your home environment.** Do you have any unsecured areas of water: a pond, a paddling pool, a discarded bucket? Or is there any chance your child can gain access to a neighbour's garden where the same hazards might apply?

**Always actively supervise your children while they are in, on, or near the water.** It is vital that any adult caring for a child is water confident and is able to take action in an emergency.

If you must leave, even for the shortest time, take your child with you or make sure that another responsible adult is supervising your child around the water - never leave an older sibling to watch your children.

**Be safety conscious at the pool side.** Check the safety arrangements for the pool. Does it have supervision, what do you need to do in an emergency?

At a private pool take a mobile phone. Always find out/know how to contact the emergency services at the start of your holiday.

**Flotation devices.** If using a flotation device, do ensure that it's the correct size and age for your child. You'll need to take the time to work out exactly how it works, and practice using it first.

**Beaches can be especially hazardous.** Always go to beaches where there are lifeguards on patrol. Ask the lifeguards where the safest places to swim are. Always supervise your children in the water - even when there are lifeguards on patrol.

**Stay sober near water.** Alcohol is a contributory factor in many UK drownings. Do not drink alcohol while in or around the water. It can impair your supervision and swimming skills.

Alcohol + hot weather + cold water = death by drowning

### First, the scary facts

Overall, drowning is the second leading cause of injury and death for children in the EU. More than 70% of the victims are boys and the most vulnerable are children one to four years of age<sup>1</sup>.

Be aware that whilst on holiday or a day trip out, the danger is greater in the sense we parents can be more relaxed and have a false sense of security for our children around water.

A drowning incident takes many people by surprise, happening silently within seconds, in as little as 2cms of water and less time than it takes to answer the phone. If a child starts to drown, survival depends on quick rescue and CPR (resuscitation) if the child has stopped breathing.

### Learn CPR (cardiopulmonary resuscitation).

Seconds count in preventing death or brain damage. In an emergency if your child stops breathing, call 999. Starting CPR will ensure your child has the best chance of making a full recovery.

### Teach your children these water safety rules:

- 🌊 Never swim alone
- 🌊 Do not engage in horseplay - pushing and jumping onto others - that might result in injury or drowning
- 🌊 Do not dive into water unless someone has already tested how deep it is and checked for any underwater hazards
- 🌊 Know what to do in an emergency and where to get help

Finally, teach your children to swim from as early as possible.

So, whilst you should never be complacent, if you're reading this sheet now, you've already started doing the very best you can for the safety of your children.

Now, that's a relief!

For more information please visit:  
[www.waterbabies.co.uk](http://www.waterbabies.co.uk)



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rlls.org.uk



It's a cliché, but it's true:  
**don't panic**

## In the event of an emergency

# 999

### Procedure for contacting the Emergency Services

#### Call 999

Regardless if you are calling from a pay phone, land line or mobile, dial 999. If you rely on your mobile phone, and are swimming in a remote place where a land line or pay phone is not accessible, ensure you have phone signal, and credit on your mobile. It is also always worth carrying an emergency phone card for a phone box.

#### Confirm the service you require

When the operator answers, make sure you clearly identify the service you require from Ambulance, Fire and Police.

#### Answer the questions clearly

Give the operator the necessary information they require. Try to answer the questions as clearly and thoroughly as possible. Be prepared to provide at least the following information:

- Exact location of incident - including street address, and town or city
- Your contact number if asked
- Your name
- What has happened
- How many people are injured
- Condition of the person(s)
- What care is being given
- Any existing health conditions of the person injured

#### Do not hang up

Make sure you do not hang up until the operator hangs up. This may be when the emergency services arrive.

#### remember:

answer the questions  
as calmly and clearly  
as possible



### If someone is drowning

Sometimes, when someone is drowning, it may not look like anything you've imagined:

- There may be very little splashing
- There may be no waving, yelling, or calls for help
- A drowning person will often drop their legs into a vertical/standing position and struggle to stay above the water

So do be absolutely aware at all times, when in or around water.